NONPROVISIONAL APPLICATION FOR LETTERS PATENT
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Be it known that I, **FRED LEWTER**, residing at **475 Barrington Grange Drive, Sharpsburg, Georgia 30277**, a citizen of the United States, have invented certain new and useful improvements in a

GOLF BAG

of which the following is a specification.

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GOLF BAG

TECHNICAL FIELD

The present invention relates generally to golfing equipment, and more specifically to a golf bag that, among other features, advantageously provides frontal access to a plurality of tiered racks adapted to receive and removably retain a plurality of golf clubs therein, thereby preventing the jostling and contact amongst same, and the resulting damage thereto, during transport of the golf bag.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

Conventional golf bags have historically provided golfers with a suitable apparatus for storing and transporting golf clubs both during play and thereafter. However, because the club heads are often exposed and/or protrude from the top of most such golf clubs, such bags are inherently deficient in their ability to protect the golf club from structural damage via forceful impact and/or collision of the clubs with one another, or with external surfaces during transport of the clubs and golf bag in a

golf cart, within the trunk of vehicle, or the cargo/luggage storage bay of an aircraft. Such forceful impact to the golf clubs may impart significant axial damage to club shaft, and structural damage to the golf head. Moreover, because many such golf bags employ tubular slots or housings for each club, clubs placed therein are subject to jostling and movement therein during transport of the bag, thereby causing facial or surface damage to the club shaft (especially easily scratched graphite shafts), or result in the club sliding out therefrom during transport of the bag in a vehicle or the like, and thus, subsequent damage thereto.

Although both soft and hard case protective golf bag covers that fully enclosed the golf bag are available, such covers do not preclude potentially destructive movement or jostling of the clubs carried within the tubular housings of the golf bag, or the harmful striking of the club heads against one another. As such, the clubs may still slidable move within the tubular housings, thereby resulting in surface damage to the shaft. Moreover, should a soft cover be selected, axial damage to the club shafts is still a possibility.

In an effort to reduce harmful striking, impact and/or contact of the club heads with one another, and to protect the club heads from unexpected harsh elements of weather, many golfers utilize padded club head covers that individually engage and cover each golf club head. Although effective in deterring harmful scathing or contact between the club heads, such head covers still do not preclude the potential of axial damage to the club shaft via external impacting forces.

Still another deficiency associated with conventional golf bags is the poor presentation, removability and accessibility of the clubs, thereby often contributing or lending to structural and facial damage to the golf club shafts. Specifically, because most golf bags utilize long, tubular slots to house each club, and because most such slots are arranged within a generally circular configuration due to the generally cylindrical structure or shape of the golf bag, golfers must remove a club from the bag by drawing the shaft up through the tubular slot. However, due to the average length of such clubs, and the typical reach or upward arm's length stretch of the average adult golfer, removal of the club in such a manner often

results in the club being drawn or pulled from the tubular slot at an angle (i.e., as opposed to directly upward), and therefore, imparts an undesirable yield stress on the shaft as the shaft is pulled up through and against the tubular housing. Such removal also causes facial or surface damage to the club shaft. Replacement of the golf club within such tubular slots is conducted in a similar manner, angle and motion, wherein most such golfers typically release the club when recessed within tubular slot sufficient distance, letting it forcefully drop therewithin, or, alternatively, forcefully thrust the club back into the tubular housing, thereby further subjecting the club shaft to undesirable yield stress and axial force.

Therefore, it is readily apparent that there is a need for an improved golf bag that replaces conventional apparatuses and methods of golf club storage, transportation, and retrieval by advantageously eliminating conventional use of tubular housings or slots to retain and store clubs during transport, thereby preventing the harmful jostling and contact amongst same, and wherein a plurality of tiered racks adapted to receive and maintain stationary placement of a plurality of golf clubs therein

provide convenient frontal accessibility to the golf clubs, yet protect the golf club heads from harmful scathing or contact between one another. There is still a further need for an improved golf bag that protects the golf shaft from undesirable yield stress during removal of the club from the bag, from external forces that may impart undesirable axial stress on the golf shaft, and from the harsh elements of weather or other external forces that damage otherwise exposed golf club heads. There is yet still a further need for an integrated or combined golf club storage and transportation device.

BRIEF SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

Briefly described, in a preferred embodiment, the present invention overcomes the above-mentioned disadvantages and meets the recognized need for such a device by providing an improved golf bag that upon frontal opening promotes the pivoted gravitational falling and forward, limited angular displacement of a plurality of tiered racks adapted to receive and maintain stationary placement of a plurality of golf clubs therein, thereby providing convenient and organized frontal presentation and

accessibility to a variety of golf clubs, and wherein the golf bag is adapted to be seated and secured to the rear of a golf cart without external harnesses or straps, thus permitting the bag to extend beyond the rear of golf cart and provide free frontal access to the contents thereof.

According to its major aspects and broadly stated, the present invention in its preferred form is a golf bag having a housing comprising a plurality of tiered racks and golf accessory compartments, an externally located adjustable bracket, a golf cart seating notch disposed on the bottom of the housing, a wheeled base, and handle.

More specifically, the present invention is a golf bag having a housing comprising a tri-tiered rack system, wherein a first rearwardly disposed rack, preferably integrally formed with the housing, is adapted to receive and cover a plurality of "wood" golf clubs, and wherein a second and third rack, each preferably pivotally connected to the housing base, are adapted to receive "iron" clubs and "wedge" clubs, respectively. Preferably, the first and second rack comprise a base tray having a plurality of open-faced grooves, recesses or slots, wherein the open-

face of each groove or slot is preferably covered via resilient fabric, or the like, for effectuating an outer retaining wall thereover. Each slot of the first and second rack trays is preferably dimensioned to retain the upper-most portion of the handle of a club, wherein forward dislodgement of the club handle from a respective slot is precluded via the outer fabric retaining wall affixed thereover. The third rack also preferably possesses a base tray functionally, and substantially structurally, equivalent to the base trays of the first and second rack; however, the slots or recesses formed in the base tray of the third rack are preferably fully closed (i.e., cylindrical-shaped recesses or slots) and thus, do not require an overlying fabric retaining wall to preclude forward dislodgement of club handles therefrom. It is, however, contemplated that the base tray of the third rack could alternatively comprise open-faced slots covered via a fabric retaining wall.

Preferably, a portion of each club shaft just aft of each club head is securely and removably engaged within a retaining clasp of a plurality of retaining clasps disposed on the upper region of each rack (i.e., a DELRON retaining

clasp system), wherein each clasp of a particular rack is aligned with a corresponding slot formed in the tray of the rack. Additionally, to facilitate recession of each golf club within a particular clasp-and-slot arrangement, a groove extends from each clasp to an aligned slot of the tray, wherein each groove comprises a different, brightly-colored strip of adhesive tape, paint, or the like, to facilitate proper visual alignment of each clasp with a corresponding slot, and thus the proper placement of a club therein. In such a configuration, each golf club placed within the racks of the bag is presented in an organized, spaced-apart, inverted arrangement for ease of removal and replacement of same. Each rack is further preferably lined with a rubber-sponge material, or other padded material, so as to protect the clubs retained therein, wherein rubber-sponge tabs or padded walls extend from the racks to preferably separate each club head to prevent harmful or damaging contact amongst same.

Preferably the second rack is pivotally connected to the base of the bag via a double-hinge, wherein opening of the bag, in conjunction with the weight of the clubs carried by the second rack, results in the gravitational

falling and forwardly, limited angular displacement of the second rack. The gravitational falling and angular displacement of the second rack is preferably limited via pivot hinges, or the like, extending from the second rack to the sides of the housing, wherein the pivot hinges preferably limit the angular displacement of the second rack to an approximately 75 degree angle relative to the base of the golf bag.

Preferably, the third rack is also pivotally connected to the base of the bag via a bearing hinge, or the like, and thus also gravitationally falls forward upon opening of the bag, preferably into an approximately 60 degree angle relative to the base of the golf bag. The forward angular displacement of the third rack is preferably limited via pivot hinges, or the like, extending from the third rack to the sides of the housing. The forward angular displacement of the third rack is further preferably limited upon contact of the bottom edge of the rack with the base of the bag, and via a relatively large storage compartment removably affixed on the forward face thereof. Additionally, it is contemplated that the gravitational falling and pivoting of the second rack may assist in

pushing against the third rack, and thus, promote the gravitational falling or pivoting of same into a forwardly angled position.

An adjustable "hook-shaped" bracket is preferably disposed on the rear side of the housing for facilitating engagement of the bag to horizontal bars formed on the rear chassis of conventional golf carts, wherein the bracket is preferably adjustable from heights of approximately 31 inches to approximately 36 inches from the base of the bag so as to accommodate all current makes and models of golf carts. Additionally, to facilitate the secured engagement of the bag to the rear of the golf cart, a groove or notch is preferably formed on the underside of the base of the bag, wherein the notch is preferably dimensioned to engage an outer-most ridge or wall of a conventional golf bag storage area formed on most golf carts. Such a configuration preferably permits the bag to extend beyond the rear of the golf cart and provide free frontal access to the contents thereof.

The housing of golf bag further preferably possesses rear mounted wheels that sit preferably approximately 1

inch from the ground when the base of the golf bag seated substantially flush with the ground, wherein the wheels become operative preferably upon tilting the bag beyond an approximately 65 degree angle, relative to the ground, via a handle integrally formed at the upper-most rear side of the bag housing.

Furthermore, soft-cover closure flaps of the bag provide central access to the bag via a zipper mechanism, wherein unzipping the closure flaps from top to bottom of the bag results in gravitational falling and pivotal displacement of the racks as described above. The inner surface of each closure flap preferably comprises a plurality of pockets and compartments, each accessible upon "peeling" and fastening back each closure flap via hook-and-loop fasteners, or the like, so as to expose the inner surfaces thereof. It is contemplated in an alternate embodiment that the closure flaps could be in the form of hard-cover closure flaps. It is further contemplated that the closure flaps could comprise a plurality of tensioned ribs so as to facilitate the tensioned closing and opening of same, wherein such an embodiment could further incorporate pivot hinges, or other connecting arms or

devices, attached to the second rack to facilitate the outward pushing and gravitational falling of same upon tensioned opening of each closure flap. It is contemplated in still another alternate embodiment that the housing could utilize a single closure flap having a side-disposed zipper mechanism or the like. In yet another alternate embodiment, it is contemplated that the rear of the housing could incorporate an extendable rain cover adapted to shield the bag in either an opened or closed state.

An alternate embodiment of the present invention contemplates replacing the pivotally-affixed third rack, and the removable storage compartment thereof, with a detachable third rack securely and removably supported by a pivotally-affixed support plate adapted to removably secure a storage compartment thereto. The detachable third rack comprises a stake for securing the rack into the earthen ground, thereby maintaining the rack, and the golf clubs carried thereby, in an upright position and off of wet or dew-covered grass, sand, or the like. The stake of the rack is received by a pocket integrally formed with the rear of the support plate, wherein the forward face of the support plate is adapted to removably secure a storage

compartment thereto via hook-and-loop fasteners, or the like. A handle disposed on the rack assists in removing same from the support rack.

Accordingly, a feature and advantage of the present invention is its ability to provide an improved golf bag that upon frontal opening promotes the pivoted gravitational falling and forward, limited angular displacement of a plurality of tiered racks adapted to receive and maintain stationary placement of a plurality of golf clubs therein, thereby providing convenient and organized frontal presentation and accessibility to a variety of golf clubs.

Another feature and advantage of the present invention is its ability to provide an improved golf bag that replaces conventional apparatuses and methods of golf club storage, transportation, and retrieval typically responsible for harmful jostling and contact amongst golf clubs retained therein.

Still another feature and advantage of the present invention is its ability to protect golf club heads from harmful scratching or contact amongst one another.

Yet another feature and advantage of the present invention is its ability to provide an improved golf bag that protects the golf shaft from undesirable yield stress during removal of the club from the bag, from external forces that may impart undesirable axial stress on the golf shaft, and from the harsh elements of weather or other external forces that damage otherwise exposed golf club heads.

Yet still another feature and advantage of the present invention is its ability to provide an externally located adjustable bracket, and a golf cart seating notch disposed on the bottom of the golf bag, to facilitate secured engagement and support of the golf bag to the rear of a golf cart without the need of external straps or harnesses.

A further feature and advantage of the present invention is its ability to provide a golf bag capable of fully enclosing and protecting all contents place therein.

These and other features and advantages of the present invention will become more apparent to one skilled in the art from the following description and claims when read in light of the accompanying drawings.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

The present invention will be better understood by reading the Detailed Description of the Preferred and Alternate Embodiments with reference to the accompanying drawing figures, in which like reference numerals denote similar structure and refer to like elements throughout, and in which:

FIG. 1 is a perspective view of a golf bag according to a preferred embodiment of the present invention;

FIG. 1A is an exploded view of a golf bag according to a preferred embodiment of the present invention;

FIG. 1B is an exploded view of a golf bag according to a preferred embodiment of the present invention;

FIG. 1C is an exploded view of a golf bag according to a preferred embodiment of the present invention;

FIG. 2 is a side view of a golf bag according to a preferred embodiment of the present invention;

FIG. 2A is a side view of a golf bag according to a preferred embodiment of the present invention;

FIG. 2B is a side view of a golf bag according to a preferred embodiment of the present invention;

FIG. 3 is a front view of a golf bag according to a preferred embodiment of the present invention;

FIG. 3A is a front view of a golf bag according to a preferred embodiment of the present invention;

FIG. 3B is a front view of a golf bag according to a preferred embodiment of the present invention;

FIG. 4 is a perspective view of a golf bag according to an alternate embodiment of the present invention;

FIG. 5 is a perspective view of a golf bag according to an alternate embodiment of the present invention;

FIG. 6 is a front view of a golf bag according to an alternate embodiment of the present invention;

FIG. 7 is a front view of a golf bag according to an alternate embodiment of the present invention; and,

FIG. 8 is a rear perspective view of a golf bag according to an alternate embodiment of the present invention.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED AND ALTERNATIVE EMBODIMENTS

In describing the preferred and alternate embodiments of the present invention, as illustrated in **FIGS. 1-8**, specific terminology is employed for the sake of clarity. The invention, however, is not intended to be limited to the specific terminology so selected, and it is to be understood that each specific element includes all

technical equivalents that operate in a similar manner to accomplish similar functions.

Referring now to **FIGS. 1-3B**, the present invention in a preferred embodiment is a golf bag **10**, generally comprising housing **20**, first rack **60**, second rack **110**, third rack **190**, storage compartment **250**, adjustable bracket **260**, golf cart seating notch **280**, wheel assembly **290**, handle **300**, and front cover **320**. More specifically, housing **20** preferably includes upright member **22** integrally formed with, and disposed substantially perpendicular to, base member **24**, wherein upright member **22** preferably comprises recessed inner wall **22a** and exterior wall **22b**, and wherein base member **24** preferably comprises top side **24a** and bottom side **24b**. Housing **20**, first rack **60**, second rack **110** and third rack **190**, in general, are preferably formed from a durable, non-porous, plastic; although other suitable materials could be utilized, such as, for exemplary purposes only, aluminum, titanium, or other light-weight metals, water-sealed and/or finished woods, combinations thereof, and/or the like.

Preferably integrally formed with recessed inner wall **22a** of upright member **22** is fixed or stationary first rack **60**, wherein club head recesses **62**, **64**, **66** and **68** are preferably formed in upper portion **60a** of first rack **60**, and preferably dimensioned and adapted to receive and cover the club heads of "wood-type" golf clubs. As best illustrated in **FIG. 2**, overhang or extension **22d** preferably extends from, and is integrally formed with, upper wall **22c** of upright member **22**, wherein overhang **22d** preferably functions to shelter the "wood-type" golf clubs retained within first rack **60**, as more fully described below.

Preferably disposed on lower portion **60b** of first rack **60** is base tray **70**, preferably comprising open-faced grooves, recesses or slots **72**, **74**, **76** and **78**. The open-face of each groove or slot **72**, **74**, **76** and **78** is preferably covered via resilient fabric retaining walls **72a**, **74a**, **76a** and **78a**, respectively, for effectuating an outer retaining wall thereover, thereby preventing forward and/or lateral dislodgement of golf club handles seated therewithin. Specifically, each slot **72**, **74**, **76** and **78** preferably comprises a depth dimensioned to retain the upper-most portion of the handle or shaft of a "wood-type" golf club

placed therein. It is intended within the primary embodiment that approximately the first **6** inches of the handle portion of a "wood-type" golf club be accommodated within a respective slot; however, it should be recognized that other suitable depths could be utilized to effectuate or facilitate ease of removal and/or retention of a golf club handle placed therein.

Preferably disposed below club head recesses **62**, **64**, **66** and **68** are retaining clasps **82**, **84**, **86** and **88**, respectively, preferably extending from, and secured to, retaining bar **80**, as best illustrated in **FIG. 1A**. Retaining clasps **82**, **84**, **86** and **88** are preferably aligned with slots **72**, **74**, **76** and **78**, respectively, of base tray **70**, thereby facilitating substantially vertical retention of "wood-type" golf clubs therein. Specifically, preferably following placement of the handle of a golf club within a selected slot **72**, **74**, **76** or **78** of base tray **70**, the respective retaining clasp **82**, **84**, **86** or **88** securely receives and removably engages a portion of the golf club shaft just aft of the golf club head.

Additionally, to facilitate recession of each "wood-type" golf club within a particular clasp-and-slot arrangement, grooves **90**, **92**, **94** and **96** formed in inner wall **22a** preferably extend from retaining clasps **82**, **84**, **86** and **88**, respectively, to aligned slots **72**, **74**, **76** and **78**, respectively, of base tray **70**. Furthermore, grooves **90**, **92**, **94** and **96** preferably comprise different, brightly-colored strips **90a**, **92a**, **94a** and **96a** of adhesive tape, paint, or the like, to facilitate proper visual alignment of each clasp **82**, **84**, **86** and **88** with a corresponding slot **72**, **74**, **76** and **78**, and thus the proper placement of a club therein.

First rack **60** is further preferably lined with a rubber-sponge material, or other padded material, so as to protect the "wood-type" golf clubs retained therein from harmful contact, scratching, scuffing, or the like. Additionally, rubber-sponge or padded dividers **98**, **100** and **102**, preferably extend from, and are integrally formed with, inner wall **22a**, thereby functioning to preclude contact amongst the club heads of each "wood-type" golf club stored within rack **60**. Specifically, divider **98** is preferably positioned between club head recesses **62** and **64**,

divider **100** is preferably positioned between club head recesses **64** and **66**, and divider **102** is preferably positioned between club head recesses **66** and **68**, thereby separating each club head from one another, and preventing harmful or damaging contact amongst same.

With continued reference to **FIGS. 1-3B**, second rack **110** is preferably adapted to receive and removably retain "iron-type" golf clubs therein. More specifically, preferably formed on front side **110a** of second rack **110** and disposed on lower portion **110d** thereof is base tray **112**, preferably comprising open-faced grooves, recesses or slots **114**, **116**, **118**, **120**, **122**, **124**, **126** and **128**. The open-face of each groove or slot **114**, **116**, **118**, **120**, **122**, **124**, **126** and **128** is preferably covered via resilient fabric retaining walls **114a**, **116a**, **118a**, **120a**, **122a**, **124a**, **126a** and **128a**, respectively, for effectuating an outer retaining wall thereover, thereby preventing forward and/or lateral dislodgement of golf club handles seated therewithin. Specifically, each slot **114**, **116**, **118**, **120**, **122**, **124**, **126** and **128** preferably comprises a depth dimensioned to retain the upper-most portion of the handle or shaft of an "iron-type" golf club placed therein. It is intended within the

primary embodiment that approximately the first **6** inches of the handle portion of an "iron-type" golf club be accommodated within a respective slot; however, it should be recognized that other suitable depths could be utilized to effectuate or facilitate ease of removal and/or retention of a golf club handle placed therein.

Preferably disposed on upper portion **110c** of front side **110a** of second rack **110** is retaining bar **150**, preferably having retaining clasps **130**, **132**, **134**, **136**, **138**, **140**, **142** and **144** extending therefrom and secured thereto, as best illustrated in **FIG. 1B**. Retaining bar **150** is preferably affixed to front side **110a** at a suitable slant or incline to accommodate the generally increasing height or length of each "iron-type" golf club retained thereby (i.e., a number **2** "iron-type" golf club through a number nine "iron-type" golf club). Retaining clasps **130**, **132**, **134**, **136**, **138**, **140**, **142** and **144** are preferably aligned with slots **114**, **116**, **118**, **120**, **122**, **124**, **126** and **128**, respectively, of base tray **112**, thereby facilitating substantially vertical retention of "iron-type" golf clubs therein. Specifically, preferably following placement of the handle of a golf club within a selected slot **114**, **116**,

118, **120**, **122**, **124**, **126** or **128** of base tray **112**, the respective retaining clasp **130**, **132**, **134**, **136**, **138**, **140**, **142** or **144** securely receives and removably engages a portion of the golf club shaft just aft of the golf club head.

Additionally, to facilitate recession of each "iron-type" golf club within a particular clasp-and-slot arrangement, grooves **152**, **154**, **156**, **158**, **160**, **162**, **164** and **166** formed in front side **110a** preferably extend from retaining clasps **130**, **132**, **134**, **136**, **138**, **140**, **142** and **144**, respectively, to aligned slots **114**, **116**, **118**, **120**, **122**, **124**, **126** and **128**, respectively, of base tray **112**. Furthermore, grooves **152**, **154**, **156**, **158**, **160**, **162**, **164** and **166** preferably comprise different, brightly-colored strips **152a**, **154a**, **156a**, **158a**, **160a**, **162a**, **164a** and **166a** of adhesive tape, paint, or the like, to facilitate proper visual alignment of each clasp **130**, **132**, **134**, **136**, **138**, **140**, **142** and **144** with a corresponding slot **114**, **116**, **118**, **120**, **122**, **124**, **126** and **128**, and thus the proper placement of a club therein.

Second rack **110** is also preferably lined with a rubber-sponge material, or other padded material, so as to protect the "iron-type" golf clubs retained therein from harmful contact, scratching, scuffing, or the like. Additionally, rubber-sponge or padded dividers **170**, **172**, **174**, **176**, **178**, **180** and **182**, preferably extend from, and are integrally formed with, front side **110a**, thereby functioning to preclude contact amongst the club heads of each "iron-type" golf club stored within rack **110**. Specifically, divider **170** is preferably positioned between clasps **130** and **132**, divider **172** is preferably positioned between clasps **132** and **134**, divider **174** is preferably positioned between clasps **134** and **136**, divider **176** is preferably positioned between clasps **136** and **138**, divider **178** is preferably positioned between clasps **138** and **140**, divider **180** is preferably positioned between clasps **140** and **142**, and divider **182** is preferably positioned between clasps **142** and **144**, thereby separating each club head from one another, and preventing harmful or damaging contact amongst same.

Preferably, and as best illustrated in **FIG. 2**, second rack **110** is pivotally connected to top side **24a** of base

member **24** of housing **20** via double-hinge **184**. Specifically, first portion **184a** of double-hinge **184** is pivotally connected to top side **24a** of base member **24**, proximal to fixed base tray **70** of first rack **60**, wherein second portion **184b** of double-hinge **184** is preferably pivotally connected to rear side **110b** of second rack **110**, proximate bottom edge **110e** thereof. Preferably, and as more fully described below, the opening of bag **10**, in conjunction with the weight of the "iron-type" golf clubs carried by second rack **110**, results in the gravitational falling and forwardly, limited angular displacement of second rack **110**. The gravitational falling and angular displacement of second rack **110** is preferably limited via pivot hinges **186** and **188**, or the like, extending from side edges **110f** and **110g**, respectively, of second rack **110** to front inner edges **22e** and **22f** of upright member **22** of housing **20**. Preferably, pivot hinges **186** and **188** limit the gravitational falling and angular displacement of second rack **110** to an approximately **75** degree angle relative to base member **24** of golf bag **10**; however, other suitable limited angular displacements or angles could be utilized to manipulate the forwardly angled presentation of second

rack **110** and the "iron-type" golf clubs removably retained thereby.

Third rack **190** is preferably adapted to receive and removably retain "wedge-type" golf clubs and a putter club therein. More specifically, preferably formed on front side **190a** of third rack **190** and disposed on lower portion **190d** thereof is base tray **192**, preferably comprising fully-closed recesses or slots **194**, **196**, **198** and **200** formed therein. Preferably disposed between slots **196** and **198**, and extending upwardly from base tray **190**, is elongated putter retaining tube **202**, wherein putter retaining tube **202** functions to receive and house the shaft of a conventional putter club therein. Each slot **194**, **196**, **198** and **200** preferably comprises a depth dimensioned to retain the upper-most portion of the handle or shaft of a "wedge-type" golf club placed therein. Specifically, it is intended within the primary embodiment that approximately the first **6** inches of the handle portion of a "wedge-type" golf club be accommodated within a respective slot; however, it should be recognized that other suitable depths could be utilized to effectuate or facilitate ease of removal and/or retention of a golf club handle placed

therein. It is contemplated in an alternate embodiment that base tray **192** of third rack **190** could comprise open-faced slots covered via a fabric retaining wall to retain the handle portions of "wedge-type" golf clubs and/or a putter club therein (i.e., equivalent to base trays **70** and **112** of first rack **60** and second rack **110**, respectively). It is further contemplated that putter tube **202** could be replaced with a fully-closed recess or slot formed in base tray **192** of third rack **190**.

Preferably disposed on upper portion **190c** of front side **190a** of third rack **190** is retaining bar **210**, preferably having retaining clasps **212**, **214**, **216**, **218** and **220** extending therefrom and secured thereto, as best illustrated in **FIG. 1C**. Retaining clasps **212**, **214**, **216** and **218** are preferably aligned with slots **194**, **196**, **198**, and **200**, respectively, of base tray **192**, wherein retaining clasp **220** is preferably aligned over putter retaining tube **202** of base tray **192**, thereby facilitating substantially vertical retention of "wedge-type" golf clubs and a putter club therein. Specifically, preferably following placement of the handle of a golf club within a selected slot **194**, **196**, **198** or **200** of base tray **192**, the respective retaining

clasp **212**, **214**, **216** or **218** securely receives and removably engages a portion of the golf club shaft just aft of the golf club head. Similarly, preferably following placement of the shaft of a putter club within putter retaining tube **202** of base tray **192**, retaining clasp **220** securely receives and removably engages a portion of the putter club shaft just aft of the putter club head.

Additionally, to facilitate recession of each "wedge-type" golf club within a particular clasp-and-slot arrangement, grooves **222**, **224**, **226** and **228** formed in front side **190a** preferably extend from retaining clasps **212**, **214**, **216** and **218**, respectively, to aligned slots **194**, **196**, **198** and **200**, respectively, of base tray **192**. Furthermore, grooves **222**, **224**, **226** and **228** preferably comprise different, brightly-colored strips **222a**, **224a**, **226a** and **228a** of adhesive tape, paint, or the like, to facilitate proper visual alignment of each clasp **212**, **214**, **216** and **218** with a corresponding slot **194**, **196**, **198** and **200**, and thus the proper placement of a club therein.

Third rack **190** is also preferably lined with a rubber-sponge material, or other padded material, so as to protect

the "wedge-type" golf clubs and putter club retained therein from harmful contact, scratching, scuffing, or the like. Additionally, rubber-sponge or padded dividers **232**, **234**, **236** and **238**, preferably extend from, and are integrally formed with, front side **190a**, thereby functioning to preclude contact amongst the club heads of each "wedge-type" golf club and putter club stored within rack **190**. Specifically, divider **232** is preferably positioned between clasps **212** and **214**, divider **234** is preferably positioned between clasps **214** and **220**, divider **236** is preferably positioned between clasps **220** and **216**, and divider **238** is preferably positioned between clasps **216** and **218**, thereby separating each club/putter head from one another, and preventing harmful or damaging contact amongst same.

Preferably, and as best illustrated in **FIGS. 2-2B**, third rack **190** is pivotally connected to top side **24a** of base member **24** of housing **20** via bearing hinge **240**, preferably extending from top side **24a** of base member **24**, proximal to base tray **112** of second rack **110**, to rear side **190b** of third rack **190**, proximate bottom edge **190e** thereof. Preferably, and as more fully described below, the opening

of bag **10**, in conjunction with the weight of the golf clubs and putter carried by third rack **190**, assist in promoting the gravitational falling and forwardly, limited angular displacement of third rack **190**.

Specifically, the gravitational falling and angular displacement of third rack **190** is preferably limited via pivot hinges **187** and **189**, or the like, extending from sides **190f** and **190g**, respectively, of third rack **190** to front inner edges **22e** and **22f** of upright member **22** of housing **20**. Preferably, pivot hinges **187** and **189** limit the gravitational falling and angular displacement of third rack **190** to an approximately **60** degree angle relative to top surface **24a** of base member **24** of housing **20**; however, other suitable limited angular displacements or angles could be utilized to manipulate the forwardly angled presentation of third rack **190** and the "wedge-type" golf clubs and putter club removably retained thereby.

The forward gravitational falling and angular displacement of third rack **190** is further preferably limited upon contact of bottom edge **190e** of third rack **190** with top surface **24a** of base member **24**, and via a

relatively large storage compartment **250** removably affixed to forward side **190a** of third rack **190**, proximal the edges of sides **190f** and **190g** thereof, as more fully described below. Additionally, it should be recognized that the forward gravitational falling and pivoting of second rack **110** may assist in pushing against third rack **190**, and thus, promote the gravitational falling or pivoting of same into a forwardly angled position.

As such, the collective forward gravitational falling and pivoting of second rack **110** and third rack **190**, preferably functions to present each golf club placed within racks **60**, **110** and **190** of bag **10** in an organized, spaced-apart, inverted arrangement for ease of removal and replacement of same.

It should be recognized that pivot hinges **186** and **188** of second rack **110**, and pivot hinges **187** and **189** of third rack **190**, when in an extended position (i.e., when second rack **110** and third rack **190** are forwardly angularly displaced), should be sufficiently frictional or tensioned to resist retracting when a previously removed golf club is subsequently replaced and snapped into a respective rack,

thereby providing single-handed removal and replacement of golf clubs therein. However, it should be recognized that the combined weight of the clubs within racks **110** and **190**, as well as storage compartment **250**, functionally assist in maintaining racks **110** and **190** in a forward, angled position when a previously removed golf club is subsequently replaced and snapped therein (i.e., resist being pushed back into a recessed, upright or non-angled position). It is contemplated that pivot hinges **186**, **187**, **188** and **189** could possess releasable locking mechanisms that lock each pivot hinge **186**, **187**, **188** and **189** into an extended position, wherein pivot hinges **186**, **187**, **188** and **189** could then be subsequently retracted upon release of the locking mechanisms thereof.

Preferably, storage compartment **250** is removably affixed or securable to forward side **190a** of third rack **190**, proximal the edges of sides **190f** and **190g** thereof, via hook-and-loop fasteners **251**; however, clasps, clips, zippers, snap-buttons, straps, ties, buckles, or the like, could also be utilized. Storage compartment **250** is removably fastened and disposed on forward side **190a** of third rack **190** in such a manner so as to not obstruct

access to tray **192** of third rack **190**. Storage compartment **250** is preferably a multi-compartment zippered bag for storing golf balls, tees, gloves, towels, and other golf and/or personal accessories. It is further contemplated that storage compartment **250** could be either a soft cover or hard cover bag. It is still further contemplated that at least a portion of storage compartment **250** could be a food cooler.

Referring now more specifically to **FIG. 2A**, adjustable "hook-shaped" bracket **260** is preferably disposed within channel **270** vertically formed on exterior wall **22b** of upright member **22**, wherein bracket **260** preferably facilitates engagement of golf bag **10** to horizontal bars formed on the rear chassis of conventional golf carts. Specifically, sides **262a** and **262b** of first end **262** of bracket **260** preferably comprise cylindrical-shaped dowels or protrusions **261a** and **261b**, respectively, that preferably slidably engage opposing grooves **270a** and **270b**, respectively, formed within channel **270**, thereby facilitating the vertical "riding" or slidable adjustment of bracket **270** therewithin. First end **262** of bracket **260** further preferably comprises a ribbed outer surface **263**

adapted to interlock with ribs **271** formed along the length of channel **270**. To facilitate tensioned adjustment and locking of bracket **260** with channel **270**, bracket **260** is preferably internally spring-biased, wherein inward depression of bracket **260** via hooked-shaped second end **264** preferably releases ribbed surface **263** of first end **262** from interlocked engagement with ribs **271** of channel **270**, thereby permitting the vertical adjustment of bracket **260** therewithin. Upon adjusting bracket **260** to a desired height, bracket **260** is released; springfully urging ribbed surface **263** thereof back into interlocking engagement with ribs **271** of channel **270**, wherein bag **10** may then be secured to a horizontal bars formed on the rear chassis of conventional golf carts via hook-shaped second end **264** of bracket **260**. Bracket **260** is preferably adjustable within channel **270** from heights of approximately **31** inches to approximately **36** inches from bottom side **24b** of base member **24** so as to accommodate all current makes and models of golf carts. Additionally, to facilitate the secured engagement of bag **10** to the rear of the golf cart, groove or notch **280** is preferably formed on bottom side **24b** of base member **24**, proximal lower forward edge **24c** thereof, wherein notch **280** is preferably dimensioned to engage an

outer-most ridge or wall of a conventional golf bag storage area formed on most golf carts. Such a configuration preferably permits bag **10** to extend beyond the rear of the golf cart and provide free frontal access to the contents thereof.

Preferably disposed on lower portion **21** of exterior wall **22a** of upright member **22**, proximal base member **24**, is rear mounted wheel assembly **290** comprising wheels **292** and **294** that sit preferably approximately 1 inch from the earthen ground/surface when bottom side **24b** of base member **24** is seated substantially flush with therewith. Preferably, wheels **292** and **294** become operative upon tilting bag **10** beyond an approximately **65** degree angle, relative to the ground, via handle **300** integrally formed with upper portion **23** of exterior wall **22a** of upright member **22**. Although wheels **292** and **294** preferably sit approximately **1** inch from the ground, it is contemplated that wheels **292** and **294** may be positioned at a greater or lesser height therefrom so as to accordingly manipulated the tilting angle of bag **10** required to operate wheels **292** and **294**. It is further contemplated that wheels **292** and **294** could be positioned so as to sit flush and/or extend

beyond bottom side **24b** of base member **24** when bottom side **24b** is seated substantially flush with the ground, wherein such an embodiment could further incorporated wheel locks to prevent inadvertent movement or rolling of bag **10**.

Referring now more specifically to **FIGS. 3-3B**, to shield or cover the interior of bag **10**, and to protect the golf clubs retained therein, soft, front cover **320** preferably extends from, and is affixed along the entirety of front peripheral edge **22p** of upright member **22**, and along the upper peripheral edge **24p** of base member **24**. Preferably, zipper mechanism **322** centrally and vertically disposed on cover **320** provides access to the contents of golf bag **10**, wherein "opening" or downwardly unzipping zipper mechanism **322** separates cover **320** into closure flaps **324** and **326**. As described above, unzipping zipper mechanism **322** of cover **320** preferably results in gravitational falling and pivotal displacement of storage compartment **250**, and racks **110** and **190**, thereby presenting the golf clubs retained therein, as well as the golf clubs retained in rearwardly-disposed first rack **60**. Inner surfaces **324a** and **326a** of closure flaps **324** and **326**, respectively, preferably comprises a plurality of pockets

and/or storage compartments **328**, each accessible upon "peeling" back each closure flap **324** and **326**, and fastening same to exterior wall **22b** of upright member **22** via cooperative hook-and-loop fasteners **330** carried by closure flap **324** and **326** and exterior wall **22b**; although other suitable fastening mechanisms could be utilized, such as, for exemplary purposes only, straps, ties, buckle-and-strap assemblies, snap-buttons, clips, or the like.

It is contemplated in an alternate embodiment that cover **320** could be in the form of a hard-cover, and, as such, possess hard-cover closure flaps mechanically separable via buckles, latches or like, instead of zipper mechanism **322**.

Referring now more specifically to **FIGS. 4-5**, illustrated therein is an alternate embodiment of golf bag **10**, wherein the alternate embodiment of **FIGS. 4-5** is substantially equivalent in form and function to that of the preferred embodiment detailed and illustrated in **FIGS. 1-3B** except as hereinafter specifically referenced. Specifically, the embodiment of **FIGS. 4-5** replaces pivotally-affixed third rack **190**, and removable storage

compartment **250** thereof, with detachable third rack **400**, wherein rack **400** is securely and removably supported by pivotally-affixed support plate **450**, adapted to removably secure a storage compartment thereto. Specifically, similar to third rack **190**, rack **400** includes retaining bar **210** with associated retaining clasps **212**, **214**, **216**, **218** and **220**, and base tray **192** with associated slots **194**, **196**, **198**, and **200**, as well as putter retaining tube **202** extending therefrom. However, in the present alternate embodiment, retaining bar **210** and base tray **192** are secured to, and opposingly positioned on, central support bar **402**. Formed at first end **402a** of central support bar **402** is stake or spike **404**, wherein second end **402b** comprises handle **406** integrally formed therewith. Stake or spike **404** is utilized to stake and secure detachable rack **400** into the earthen ground, thereby maintaining rack **400**, and the golf clubs carried thereby, in an upright position, and off of wet or dew-covered grass, sand, or the like. Stake or spike **404** of rack **400** is received by open-ended retaining pocket **452** integrally formed with rear side **450b** of support plate **450**, wherein complete recession of spike **404** within pocket **452** results in extension of spike **404** therethrough. As best illustrated in **FIG. 5**, handle **406** assists in

removing spike **404** from retaining pocket **452** of rack **450**, and, as such, rack **400** in its entirety from golf bag **10**, thereby permitting the transport of same, as well as the "wedge-type" golf clubs and putter club removably retained thereby. Front side **450a** of support plate **450** is adapted to removably secure storage compartment **250** thereto via hook-and-loop fasteners **251**, or the like. Additionally, similar to third rack **190**, support plate **450** is pivotally connected to top side **24a** of base member **24** of housing **20** via bearing hinge **240**, extending from top side **24a** of base member **24**, proximal to base tray **112** of second rack **110**, to rear side **250b** of support plate **450**, proximate bottom edge **450e** thereof. As such, the opening of bag **10**, in conjunction with the weight of the golf clubs and putter carried by rack **400**, assist in promoting the gravitational falling and forwardly, limited angular displacement of third rack **400**, support rack **450** and storage compartment **250**.

Referring now more specifically to **FIG. 6**, illustrated therein is an alternate embodiment of golf bag **10**, wherein the alternate embodiment of **FIG. 6** is substantially equivalent in form and function to that of the preferred

embodiment detailed and illustrated in **FIGS. 1-3B** except as hereinafter specifically referenced. Specifically, the embodiment of **FIG. 6** replaces soft closure flaps **324** and **326** with closure flaps **524** and **526**, wherein closure flaps **524** and **526** comprise a plurality of tensioned ribs so as to facilitate the tensioned closing and opening of same. It is contemplated in such an embodiment that pivot arms **550** and **552**, or other connecting arms or devices, would extend from second rack **110**, and subsequently each branch off into a plurality of tensioned ribs **540**, wherein ribs **540** would be attached to the front edges of closure flaps **524** and **526**. Unzipping of zipper mechanism **555** tensionally urges closure flaps **524** and **526** into an open and completely folded-back position, thereby facilitating the outward pushing and gravitational falling of second rack **110** and third rack **190**. The uptake or retraction of second rack **110** and third rack **190** is facilitated via the tensioned closing of closure flap **524** and **526**.

Referring now more specifically to **FIG. 7**, illustrated therein is an alternate embodiment of golf bag **10**, wherein the alternate embodiment of **FIG. 7** is substantially equivalent in form and function to that of the preferred

embodiment detailed and illustrated in **FIGS. 1-3B** except as hereinafter specifically referenced. Specifically, the embodiment of **FIG. 7** replaces soft closure flaps **324** and **326** with accordion-like or pleated closure flaps **624** and **626**, wherein closure flaps **624** and **626** comprise internal ribbing to facilitate the pleated extension and retraction of each closure flaps **624** and **626**.

Referring now more specifically to **FIG. 8**, illustrated therein is an alternate embodiment of golf bag **10**, wherein the alternate embodiment of **FIG. 8** is substantially equivalent in form and function to that of the preferred embodiment detailed and illustrated in **FIGS. 1-3B** except as hereinafter specifically referenced. Specifically, adjustable bracket **260** is replaced via adjustable strap assembly **700**, wherein strap assembly **700** functions as both a handle, and further facilitates engagement of golf bag **10** to horizontal bars formed on the rear chassis of conventional golf carts. That is, conventional soft-body golf bags often include a plurality of interiorly and/or exteriorly disposed structural support spines to impart a desired rigidity to the golf bag, wherein such spines are also located on the rear of the golf bag. Additionally,

many such conventional golf bags often include a plurality of rings disposed on the rear side thereof, wherein such rings are utilized to carry towels, hats, or the like. Furthermore, conventional golf bags incorporate a rearwardly disposed tote handle to facilitate carriage of the golf bag, wherein such a handle is often disposed between two rearwardly disposed support spines. As such, the present alternate embodiment contemplates replacing the conventional tote handle of available soft-body golf bags with strap assembly **700**. Specifically, strap assembly **700** utilizes rear support spines **S1** and **S2** on rear side **RS** of soft-body golf bag **SB**, wherein an adjustable slide bar **702** is slidably engaged therewith via throughholes **704** and **706** formed therethrough; it should be recognized that although spines **S1** and **S2** are illustrated as generally cylindrically-shaped support spines, support spines of other shapes could be equipped with slide bar **702**, wherein throughholes **704** and **706** thereof would be suitable shaped to facilitate slidable engagement therewith. Extending from slide bar **702** is strap **708**, wherein strap **708** comprises hook portion **710a** and loop portion **710b** of hook-and-loop fastener **710**. Threading hook-and-loop fastener **710** through conventional ring **R**, and thereafter engaging

hook portion **710a** with loop portion **710b** forms a functional handle in which to tote or carry golf bag **SB**. Disengaging hook portion **710a** from loop portion **710b** releases strap **708** from ring **R**, and allows slide bar **702** to slidably travel through the lengths of spine **S1** and **S2**. As such, strap **708** may be looped around a horizontal bar formed on the rear chassis of conventional golf carts, and hook portion **710a** and loop portion **710b** refastened to secure golf bag **SB** thereto, wherein notch **280** of base member **24** may also engage an outer-most ridge or wall of the golf bag storage area as describe above. It should be recognized that slide bar **702** could be modified to adapt to only one spine or, alternatively, more than two spines of a golf bag. It should further be recognized that strap assembly **700** could be adapted to golf bag **10** upon manufacturing golf bag **10** with a "soft" upright member **22** and/or exterior wall **22b** having a plurality of support spines disposed therethroughout. It is contemplated that hook-and-loop fastener **710** could be replaced via any other suitable releasably fastenable mechanisms, such as, for exemplary purposes only, snap-buttons, buckles, and the like.

It is contemplated in still another alternate embodiment that housing **20** could utilize a single closure flap having a side-disposed zipper mechanism or the like.

In yet another alternate embodiment, it is contemplated that the recessed inner wall **22a** and/or exterior wall **22b** of housing **20** could incorporate an extendable rain/debris cover adapted to shield bag **10**, in either an opened or closed state, from the harsh elements of weather, sand, or other debris.

Although the retaining clasps described above are preferably utilized to securely and removably engage a portion of each club shaft just aft of each club head, it is contemplated in an alternate embodiment that other suitable retaining mechanisms could be utilized, such as for exemplary purposes only, latches, clips, clamps, straps, straps of hook-and-loop fastener, ties, hooks, spring-loaded retaining pins, and/or the like.

It is further contemplated in an alternate embodiment that the base trays of each rack **60**, **110** and **190** could be replaced with retaining clasps, each dimensioned and

adapted to securely and removably engage the handle portion of a golf club.

Although the gravitational falling and angular displacement of second rack **110** and third rack **190** is preferably controlled/limited via pivot hinges, it is contemplated in an alternate embodiment that other suitable pivotally limiting devices could be utilized, such as, for exemplary purposes only, straps, elastic straps, ropes, springs, fabric sections, hydraulic devices, pneumatic devices, or the like.

It is further contemplated in an alternate embodiment that the base trays of each rack **60**, **110** and **190** could be replaced with latches, clips, clamps, straps, straps of hook-and-loop fastener, ties, hooks, spring-loaded retaining pins, and/or the like, for securely and removably engaging the handle portions of golf clubs.

It is contemplated in still another alternate embodiment that racks **60**, **110** and **190** could each be selectively removable and/or pivotable.

It is contemplated in still a further alternate embodiment that, if desired, golf bag **10** could be manufactured so that racks **60**, **110**, **190** and **400** comprise long, tubular retaining slots or structures to house each golf club, wherein such tubular retaining slots could be incorporated either in conjunction with or in replacement of the retaining clasps described herein.

Having thus described exemplary embodiments of the present invention, it should be noted by those skilled in the art that the within disclosures are exemplary only, and that various other alternatives, adaptations, and modifications may be made within the scope of the present invention. Accordingly, the present invention is not limited to the specific embodiments illustrated herein, but is limited only by the following claims.